

Winter
THE

SEASONS.

CONSIDERED

As representing the different Periods of MAN'S
LIFE—as Evidences of the POWER, WISDOM,
and GOODNESS of GOD—and as Motives to
incite to PIETY and DEVOTION.

BY

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W I N T E R.

SPRING, Summer, Harvest, lo, these three are
past,

So Winter comes, with bitter storms; at last,
Which nips or kills the vegetable tribes,
And this the frail estate of man describes.

Assist me, O thou muse-inspiring Spring,
The wonders of thy boundless pow'r to sing;
Inspire my Muse, my thinking pow'rs of mind,
To give one lesson more to all mankind.

Since Infancy and Youth, and Manhood's past,
And poor decrepit Age is come at last;
See Death comes armed with his scythe and spade,
Wherewith the grave for mankind must be made;
Cold Mother-Earth must now the bones receive,
Which by God's pow'r at first to man she gave;
Dust must return to dust, as 'tis decreed,

And worms upon the sordid flesh must feed;
Nor rich nor poor, nor wrinkled face nor fair,
Nor high nor low, the hand of Death will spare:
There's no distinction made, the gloomy grave
Must all alike promiscuously receive.

Though fun'ral pomp, and honours high be paid
To some, when in the darksome prison laid,
While others are ingloriously inter'd;
Yet Heav'n pays no distinction, no regard,
Between the beggar and the crowned head,
When both together in the dust are laid:

Only the faithful soul ascends on high,
The wicked bound in dreary chains must lie,
Until the awful day of judgment comes,
Then shall they both hear their eternal dooms,
The one to everlasting joy and bliss,
The other with infernal snakes to hiss;
Yea, though the first a beggar poor hath been,
The last, a high exalted king or queen;
Yet wealth and honours nowise is the case,
Why these are render'd objects of disgrace;
Neither the other's abject poverty,
Shall be their passport to felicity;
But only as their diff'rent lives have been,
Whether a life of righteousness or sin.
This is the grand criterion of their lot,
All other things shall wholly be forgot;
Only when virtue suffers sore distress,
From cruel tyrants who them still oppress;
The one shall meet a gracious kind reward,
The other quite from happiness debar'd;
Plung'd in the gulf of everlasting fire,
Where they must howl, but never shall expire;
With endless wailings in th' infernal den,
Prepar'd for devils, and for wicked men.
Let this teach tyrants to be wise, and learn
The things pertaining to their great concern.

But some perhaps at this may jeer and scoff,
And put the thoughts of death and judgment off;
Like Lot's two sons-in-law, who mock'd and jeer'd,
And at the patriarch's warning only sneer'd,
Till fire and brimstone on their city fell,
And swept those rebels all at once to hell.

But those who disbelieve the word of God,
May keep the path which these proud mockers trode,
Till death shall open their deluded eyes,
And prove that truth which they accounted lies,
Yea, it shall far more tolerable be
For Sodom and Gomorrah than for thee,
O Britain ! where the word of God's reveal'd,
And nothing needful is from thee conceal'd ;
If any of thy people disbelieve,
They surely shall more punishment receive,
At the great awful and decisive day,
When God his judgment shall in full display,
Than those dark cities where they only saw
Some nat'ral touches of the moral law :
But as for us, who have the gospel clear,
We surely must be dealt with more severe.

Now, young ones often unexpected die,
Short and uncertain is their destiny ;
But, O to see those far advanc'd in age,
And just upon life's last precarious stage,
Walking upon the grave's wide gaping mouth,
As heedless as the vain unthinking youth.
How awful is the sight to look upon !
And ere we are aware they're dead and gone ;
Quite unconcern'd into the grave they fall,
As beasts for slaughter, taken from the stall !
Will nothing rouse you from your beds of sloth ?
Are you depriv'd of sense and reason both ?
Yet you as cautiously can bargains make,
As if your soul's salvation was at stake :
Yea, far more wisely present things discern,
Than those which ought to be your chief concern.

This proves the truth of what our Saviour said,
While he on earth for our instruction staid,
“ The children of this world are wiser far,
Than those of light, while in this life they are ;
Yea, better far they mind this life’s affairs,
Than heav’n-born souls on earth can manage theirs.

Nay, this is manifested day by day,
We see what efforts worldly men display,
To gather wealth, and heap up earthly store,
As if they were to live for evermore:
While those who place their hope and confidence
In things beyond the views of carnal sense,
Can indolently waste the fleeting day,
And let their precious moments run away.
The very misers may a lesson show,
How we our time and talents should bestow ;
When we behold what diligence they use
And will not scarce a fleeting moment lose ;
To heap up wealth, how they themselves will starve,
That they the hoarded stock may long preserve ;
They’ll rob from back and belly, though distressed,
And from their eyes their needful sleep and rest,
That they may make their growing stock increase,
Although by means of deep and sore distress ;
While all the benefit they reap thereby
Is but a short sight of it with the eye :
For this their god they presently must leave ;
Death does them of their all at once bereave !
And what remains when they resign their breath ?
Nought but eternal misery in death.

Yea, other worldlings may the Christian show
How he his time and talents should bestow ;

When we behold how eagerly they strive,
And how to gain their purpose they contrive :
See how the spendthrift, with unwearied pains,
Consumes his father's base ill-gotten gains !
Soon as the piteous miser's in his grave,
He thinks he now shall full enjoyment have,
And long he hopes his pleasure to enjoy,
Ere he can all his hoarded bags destroy.
Then in voluptuous ways he spends his strength,
Which brings disease and death on him at length :
Yet is he at more pains to gain his end
Than those that on the grace of God depend.
See how he spends his strength with mind and might,
In quest of pleasures both by day and night ;
And these to gain he spares no time nor pains,
Although vexation's all the prize he gains,
With sore disease of body and of mind,
And still he labours for the empty wind.
But where's the Christian that will exercise
Such diligence for an immortal prize ?

Again the man who is on honour bent,
How eagerly for that his days are spent ?
He fears no danger on the hostile plain,
Where death, relentless, multiplies the slain :
What heats and colds ; what want of rest he knows ;
What thirst and hunger oft he undergoes ?
Just or unjust the cause he scarce enquires,
While thirst for honour all his breast inspires :
Though all he seeks is but an earthly crown,
And to be thought a man of high renown.

Now, where's the Christian that behaves so bold,
To undergo such dangers, heat and cold,

To gain an int'rest in the Saviour's love,
 And to obtain the crown of life above ?
 Yea, many more, too tedious here to name,
 May put the foll'wers of the Lamb to shame ;
 Who wiser are to gain their end aright.
 Than are the children of celestial light.

But now, if nothing else will rouse from sloth,
 Consider then of death and judgment both :
 These are no fictitious dreams, nor canting wiles,
 Which oftentimes the shallow sense beguiles,
 But all mens reason must allow that death
 Seizes on all men, and recalls their breath.
 This is a truth, that no man can deny,
 That all mankind appointed are to die :
 And if the word of God be counted true,
 Judgment must also after death ensue.
 But if the word of God be not believ'd,
 By some whom Satan hath with lies deceiv'd,
 Yet other arguments the truth may prove,
 And from their minds the false deceit remove :
 For if no judgment were to follow death,
 When mortal men resign their vital breath ;
 Then sure, no God of righteousness must be,
 Who doth our words and actions hear and see,
 But worse than devils must those wretches lie,
 Who dare the being of a God deny :
 For devils they believe and tremble too,
 And that is more than such vain boasters do.
 But, O ye Atheists, if no God there be,
 Who made the universe ? and whence came ye ?
 Nothing can nothing do ; some pow'r divine
 Must needs make sun and stars alternate shine.

But why should I this argument pursue?
 Such infidels are void of reason too;
 For if there is a God, he must be just,
 And not like erring mortals made of dust.
 And if he's just, he cannot let th' oppressor
 Go unreliev'd, and let th' oppressor rest.
 A future judgment he must surely call,
 And render justice both to great and small.
 Surely the guilty he will no set free,
 Nor let the just still unrewarded be.
 Sure, retribution he must render all,
 Then must his vengeance on the guilty fall.
 And whoso after death are guilty found,
 They must by justice be for ever bound
 In chains of pow'r, unto the judgment-day,
 Till the last mite they unto justice pay;
 Which never can be done, though there they lie
 Through all the ages of eternity.

But some will say, If this must be the case
 Of all mankind, which of our fallen race
 Can e'er be sav'd? All are sinners here,
 Who then shall be at God's tribunal clear?

'Tis true that all are sinners; none are free,
 And might by justice all condemned be.
 Yet, lo, the gospel hath a plan disclos'd,
 Whereby the diff'rence may be re-compos'd,
 By faith in Christ, who hath the ransom paid,
 And satisfaction hath to justice made,
 For all who trust in him; to him adhere;
 And by obedience prove their faith sincere:
 But none shall e'er be sav'd another way,
 Than by believing, and who him obey.

Now, those who see themselves entirely lost,
On him believe; he to the uttermost
Will save them, who to him for refuge flee,
And from their guilt and bondage set them free:
But whoso dare continue to rebel,
And thereby chuse the road that leads to hell,
'Tis surely just to let them take their choice,
Since they reject the Saviour's chearing voice.
And those who trust in their own righteousness,
They also shun the Saviour's kind redress.
Who can be blam'd, although they perish all,
When they refuse the gospel's gracious call?

But to alarm all aged sinners now,
I'll death and judgment set before their view.
These no fallacious phantoms are, to fright,
But real truths, set clear before their sight.
The king of terrors ev'ry season goes,
But in the winter deals his hardest blows.
Behold him stalking, with his scythe and glass,
Wherein the sands in swift rotation pass;
And ev'ry grain that trickles through the hole,
Is certain death to some devoted soul.
Though young as well as old becomes his prey,
Yet, ah, how inexcusable are they,
Who live to seventy, or to eighty years,
Yet wholly thoughtless of their long arrears?
And some to more, as careless as the young,
Though all their nat'ral pow'rs they feel unstrung,
And warnings without number they have seen,
How thousands younger call'd by death have been,
Before their eyes, yet still remain'd secure,
As if they were for ever to endure.

Now, warnings more such sinners seldom get,
But quickly caught, like fishes in the net.
Death cuts them off at one resistless stroke,
Their thread of life with slender touch is broke,
Worn out with age, can no resistance make;
With easy hand doth death them captive take.
Quick is their exit! ah, but whither gone?
To worlds unseen; perhaps to woes unknown!
All dark and dismal is their passage through!
No penetrating eye can them pursue
Into the regions of eternity!
No; that is seal'd to ev'ry mortal eye.
Yet scripture tells us, Though a cent'ry old
The sinner die, the curse of him keeps hold.
The curse of Heav'n binds him in deathless chains,
And him consigns to fiends and endless pains.
Alas, alas, how dreadful death appears
To those who die amerc'd in Heav'n's arrears!
Death is Heav'n's messenger; his warrant's sign'd,
T' arrest his pris'ners, and in chains to bind
The guilty, and in prison them to lay
Till the last judgment, that decisive day,
When all before Christ's judgment-seat must stand,
In two divisions, plac'd by his command.
The righteous on the Judge's right-hand plac'd,
With ev'ry mark of regal honour grac'd:
The wicked, all forlorn, upon his left,
Of ev'ry refuge, ev'ry hope bereft!
And how much more immers'd in dol'rous fear,
When they the sentence from the Judge must hear?
But to the righteous first is sentence giv'n,
Which welcomes them to God, to Christ, to heav'n.

" Come, all ye blessed of my Father, come,

" Inherit now your everlasting home ;

" Inherit now the kingdom I prepar'd

" For you, ere time began ; 'tis your reward.

" Your faith, your patience, and your love to me

" Accepted were, and shall rewarded be."

These, all in triumph, shall at once up-rise,

To meet their Lord and Saviour in the skies ;

While, lo, the other, plac'd on his left hand,

To hear their sentence, all shall trembling stand.

They see their neighbours, whom they scorn'd before,

And whom their malice persecuted sore,

All rais'd triumphant, glorious to behold,

Joining th' angelic hosts, with harps of gold.

This very sight fills them with boundless pain,

For these were objects of their chief disdain.

But how much more must they be now distress'd,

To hear their own doom by the Judge express'd :

" Go now, ye cursed, and from hence retire

" With devils into everlasting fire,

" Prepar'd for Satan and his rebel crew,

" This is the sentence that belongs to you :

" For me you hated, and my grace refus'd,

" And my poor foll'wers cruelly abus'd."

Then shall they answer, " Lord, when saw we thee,

" Or thine, at any time in misery,

" And did not strive to mitigate their pain ?

" This baleful charge we utterly disdain.

" Have we not prophesied in thy great name ?

" Yea, far and near we to thy worship came ;

" We in thy name have devils dispossessed,

" And much our burning zeal for thee express'd."

Yea, many more such vain fallacious pleas,
May they produce, the righteous Judge t' appease,
But all in vain; justice must now take place,
Since they despis'd the gospel day of grace.
The day of grace is then quite at an end,
Down to the fiery lake they must descend.
Like Dathan and Abiram, they must go
Down to the gulf of everlasting woe!
Consider this, ye aged sinners all,
And now in time to God for mercy call.
Short is your day; the night comes on apace;
The day of life concludes the day of grace.
And will you still be careless and secure?
Think, how will you the fiery test endure?
Death is approaching fast, to seize on you,
And as death leaves you judgment finds you too.
Your state is fixt, at death, for weal or woe;
No other change shall men for ever know.
If justify'd you are before you die,
Then you are happy to eternity;
But if you are unjustify'd at death,
You are expos'd to everlasting wrath.
Your very last stake you're about to throw
For endless bliss, or everlasting woe!
And can you still be mute and unconcern'd,
Although you have so frequently been warn'd?
And this perhaps may be your very last,
Ere life and breath and all your hopes be past.
My heart is griev'd for you, my spirits shrink,
To leave you thus upon the awful brink
Of death, of judgment, and eternity;
O pray consider this before you die!

Trifle no more while in such dreadful case,
But haste, O haste unto the throne of grace !
Though late it be, yet do not ye despair,
Hear what the Saviour doth himself declare,
Attend his voice, nor of his goodness doubt,
“ Who comes to me (saith he) I’ll not cast out.
“ Come, all ye heavy laden souls, saith he,
“ Who long to be from guilt and bondage free ;
“ Come, learn of me, let nought your souls affright ;
“ My yoke is easy and my burden’s light.”
Now, if such promises want pow’r to draw,
Think on the threat’nings of the holy law,
Which dooms to endless wrath each human soul,
Who does not perfectly fulfil the whole.
Now this subjects all Adam’s fallen race
To everlasting wrath and dire disgrace :
And none can take this dreadful curse away,
Save Christ alone, who did the ransom pay.
Let this sink deep into your hearts, and then
You may demean yourselves becoming men.
But if no threats nor promises will do,
Then I with grief must bid you all adieu.

But as for you who are advanc’d in age,
And are just on the brink to leave life’s stage,
Who have been diligent, and have obtain’d
An int’rest in the Saviour’s love, who deign’d
To undertake the helpless sinner’s case,
And hath confer’d on you his special grace :
Fear not the king of terrors ; he will prove
To you a messenger of peace and love :
He’ll but release you from your misery,
And from your guilt and bondage set you free.

He is a friend to all the justify'd,
To whom the blood of Christ hath been apply'd.
Death is to them like beds to weary souls,
The balmy sleep their ev'ry care controuls.
And when they wake, they have no cause to fear,
When they the sound of the last trumpet hear.
'Tis not th' alarm of war, but to arise
And meet their great Redeemer in the skies,
With all his great retinue, angels bright,
How awful, and how glorious is the sight!
Lift up your heads, ye humble saints, with joy,
This day will banish all your past annoy.
Nor only past annoy, but future care,
Shall never more your peaceful rest impair.
No pain, no sickness, shall your rest annoy,
But endless peace and everlasting joy;
No thought of former things shall you molest,
Nor future fears shall more disturb your breast.
No more temptations shall your minds allure,
Nor wicked thoughts arise in you impure.
Whatever did disturb you here below,
These things henceforth you never more shall know.
The winter's past with you, the storms are o'er,
And weariness or pain shall vex no more.
Henceforth the wicked shall for ever cease,
No cruel tyrants shall disturb your peace.
These you shall see bound in eternal chains,
Rack'd with despair and everlasting pains.
Yea, Satan, your grand enemy before,
Shall ne'er molest your peace and comfort more.
The world's temptations all for ever gone,
And inward lusts shall never more be known;

No aged groans shall you for ever hear,
But youthful vigour in each face appear;
No winter storms, but everlasting spring,
Where birds of paradise for ever sing;
Eternal music charms the ravish'd ear,
Which never cloyes the melting strains to hear;
All harmony and everlasting joy
Does ev'ry heart and ev'ry tongue employ.
But what need I say it is that or this,
Who can describe infinite heav'nly blifs?
Eye hath not seen, the ear hath never heard,
What is for holy souls in heav'n prepar'd;
Nor hath it enter'd in the heart of man,
Ere to conceive such joys, do what they can;
All is a labyrinth, to us unknown,
What happiness surrounds the heav'nly throne.

But may we not reflect hereon and say,
What wretched fools, yea, worse than mad are they,
Who do the short delights of folly prize,
And heav'n's eternal happiness despise?
Yet such there are, alas, how many too,
Who eagerly the downward way pursue!
And will no threats nor promises regard,
Because they are by their own lusts ensnar'd;
And Satan too may harden them therein,
Alluring them to his deceitful gin.
And having long accusom'd been to run,
In that sure way that leads to be undone.
Thus, though advanc'd to an out-stretched age,
Ere some are call'd from off the mortal stage;
Yet are they often more in love with sin,
• Than e'er they have in all their life-time been:

The strong man armed in the aged's breast,
Is neither soon, nor easy dispossest;
He keeps his fort with all his might and main,
Until a stronger does the victory gain.
Yet if an eye is giv'n them to see
Their dreadful danger and sweet remedy,
And if a heart they can obtain to pray,
They shall not yet be wholly cast away.
Christ is the stronger than the strong man arm'd,
By whom he quickly may be sore alarm'd,
And from his strong possession forc'd to flee,
Yea, of his armour quite deprived be.
Thus shall you be deliver'd from your thrall,
If ye for his assistance humbly call.
His pow'r is infinite: believe his word;
His grace is free; he will kind help afford,
And from your bondage he will set you free,
If ye to be delivered willing be.
Consider now of this your dreadful case,
Though you have long refus'd the calls of grace,
Ev'n to the last; yet saith the Lord, If ye
Will yet return, and humbly come to me,
Although your sins have red like scarlet been,
Or crimson dye, yet shall you be made clean.

O mercy infinite! O grace divine!

With what transcendent lustre doth it shine!

If this will not make sinners hearts relent,

Sure nothing will their final fall prevent.

Lord, let thy Spirit thus thy grace apply,

Then shall the hardest heart relent and cry,

"O Lord, what wilt thou have thy pris'ner do?

To me thy will in tender mercy shew!

Though I have long a harden'd rebel been,
I now can see the madness of my sin.
Thy threats and promises I long withstood,
Till now I am by sov'reign grace subdu'd.
And wilt thou yet so old a wretch forgive?
O grant me faith thy promise to believe!"

Lord, grant this may be now the happy case,
Of all who have so long refus'd thy grace!

Then Satan would not have such room to boast,
Of multitudes of souls thy fold have lost.
Thy pow'r, O Lord, sufficient is to save,
And snatch them from this all-devouring wave:
Yet let not any dare prescribe to thee,
Whose tender mercies are for ever free;
But rather let us all adore thy grace,
That ever sav'd one of our fallen race.
This is a miracle of grace, O Lord,
That any are of Adam's race restor'd;
Especially at such a matchless price
That thine own Son must be the sacrifice!
O love unparallel'd! grace boundless free!
Angels before did ne'er such wonders see.
O may this grace melt ev'ry human heart,
Freely from ev'ry idol lust to part.

A HYMN ON WINTER.

- 1 **N**OW Spring is gone, the Summer's gone,
And Harvest too is past;
See now the Winter days come on,
With frost and snow at last.
- 2 Thus runs the fleeting age of man,
His years and days how few?
His life a hand-breadth or a span,
Both short and evil too.
- 3 He strives for wealth, but doth not know
To whom it may belong:
His days are spent in grief and woe;
His course for ever wrong.
- 4 He thinks, while in his tender age,
O were I grown to man!
How would my heart and hand engage
In many a noble plan!
- 5 What pleasure should I then enjoy,
And wond'rous things perform:
No fear should then my heart annoy,
Nor dread to meet the storm.
- 6 But when he is to manhood grown,
He finds his cares increase;
And all his tow'ring hopes are flown
Of joy and happiness.

- 7 Thus in a constant erring course,
Our fleeting days are past :
From youth to age, from bad to worse,
Till death comes on at last.
- 8 Let aged sinners this attend,
And meditate on death ;
For soon the Lord will summons send,
To seize your mortal breath.
- 9 Then judgment quickly will succeed,
And then, if unprepar'd,
How will your hearts with terror dread
To hear your doom declar'd !
- 10 Depart from me, the Judge will say,
Go, and for ever dwell
With devils ; then, without delay,
You're banish'd down to hell.
- 11 But, lo, the righteous this glad doom,
They shall with pleasure hear ;
Ye, blessed of my Father, come,
Renounce your ev'ry fear.
- 12 Enjoy the kingdom long prepar'd
For you, ere time began :
This is your great divine reward,
From me the Son of Man.



